

TO THE  
PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OF  
AMERICA.

LETTER XX.

*Prorogation of Parliament—Prince's  
Speech—Comments on it.*

Botley, 6th July, 1816.

Before I proceed to the topics, which are to form the subject of this Letter, it is my duty to correct an error, into which I was led in my last. It was there stated, in an extract from the Kentish Chronicle, that the *Earl of Thanet* was present at the Kent Meeting. I confess, that I was very much surprised to see the name of his Lordship amongst those persons, who, upon being defeated, exposed and ridiculed at an open Meeting of the County, sneaked away to a room in an inn in order to draw up and pass Addresses. I was surprised to see his Lordship's name amongst those of these men; and, a friend of his Lordship, has informed me, that I may state in the most positive terms, that the *Earl of Thanet did not attend the Meeting at Maidstone on the 17th June*; and, of course, that he had no concern in those proceedings, which were so amply dwelt upon in my Letter to the Men of Kent.

The Parliament was prorogued on the 2d instant, with the following Speech from the Prince Regent. Of the manner in which the Prince went to and returned from the House of Lords, and of the sort of salutations which he received, I will speak hereafter. I will first insert the Speech, and then offer such comments on it as it appears to me to call for.

*“ My Lords and Gentlemen,*

“ I cannot close this Session of Parliament without again expressing my deep regret at the continuance of his Majesty's lamented indisposition.

“ The cordial interest which you have manifested in the happy event of the marriage of my daughter, the Princess Charlotte, with the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, and the liberal provision which you have made for their establishment, afford an additional proof of your affectionate attachment to his Majesty's person and family, and demand my warmest acknowledgments.

“ I have the pleasure to acquaint you, that I have given the royal consent to a marriage between his Majesty's daughter the Princess Mary, and the Duke of Gloucester; and I am persuaded that this event will be highly gratifying to all his Majesty's subjects.

“ The assurances which I have received of the pacific and friendly disposition of the Powers engaged in the late war, and of their resolution to execute inviolably the terms of the treaties which I announced to you at the opening of the Session, promise the continuance of that peace so essential to the interests of all the nations of the world:

*“ Gentlemen of the House of Commons,*

“ I thank you for the supplies which you have granted for the service of the year; and I am sensible of the beneficial effects which may be expected to result from the salutary system of making provision for them in a way calculated to uphold public credit:

“ The arrangements which you have adopted for discharging the incumbances of the Civil List, and for ren-



“dering its future income adequate to its  
 “expenditure, by relieving it from a part  
 “of the charge to which it was subject,  
 “are in the highest degree gratifying and  
 “satisfactory to me; and you may be  
 “assured that nothing shall be wanting  
 “on my part to give full effect to those  
 “arrangements.

“The provision you have made for  
 “consolidating the revenues of Great  
 “Britain and Ireland, will, I doubt not,  
 “be productive of the happiest conse-  
 “quences, in cementing and advancing  
 “the interests of the United Kingdom;  
 “and must afford an additional proof of  
 “the constant disposition of Parliament  
 “to relieve the difficulties and promote  
 “the welfare of Ireland.

“*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

“The measures to which I have been  
 “under the necessity of resorting, for  
 “the suppression of those tumults and  
 “disorders which had unfortunately oc-  
 “curred in some parts of the kingdom,  
 “have been productive of the most salu-  
 “tary effects.

“I deeply lament the continuance of  
 “that pressure and distress which the  
 “circumstances of the country, at the  
 “close of so long a war, have unavoid-  
 “ably entailed on many classes of his  
 “Majesty’s subjects.

“I feel fully persuaded, however, that  
 “after the many severe trials which they  
 “have undergone, in the course of the  
 “arduous contest in which we have been  
 “engaged, and the ultimate success which  
 “has attended their glorious and perse-  
 “vering exertions, I may rely with per-  
 “fect confidence on their public spirit  
 “and fortitude in sustaining those diffi-  
 “culties, which will, I trust, be found to  
 “have arisen from causes of a temporary  
 “nature, and which cannot fail to be  
 “materially relieved by the progressive  
 “improvement of public credit, and by  
 “the reduction which has already taken  
 “place in the burdens of the people.”

As to the cordial interest which the  
 Parliament have manifested with regard  
 to the marriage, which has recently taken  
 place, I need say nothing; but, if affec-  
 tion is to be measured by grants of  
 money, there can, indeed, be no doubt,  
 that the recent grants are a very strong  
 proof of the Parliament’s affectionate at-  
 tachment to his Majesty’s person and fa-  
 mily.

Whether the intended marriage of the  
 Duke of Gloucester will be highly grati-  
 fying to all his Majesty’s subjects, the  
 Prince must know better than I pretend  
 to know; but, I will say for myself, that  
 I am highly gratified to perceive that  
 there is no *money* talked of upon this oc-  
 casion. Upon all former occasions of  
 the sort, there has always been something  
 of money. No matter who were the par-  
 ties, or what it was they were going to  
 do. There was always something in the  
 money way. Always a something to  
 make us sweat more copiously.

The assurances of the pacific disposi-  
 tion, of which the Prince speaks, and  
 which, he says, promise the continuance  
 of that peace, which is so essential to the  
 interests of all the nations of the world;  
 this assurance, does not, I am afraid, come  
 from the right source. There is little  
 doubt, perhaps, of the pacific disposition  
 of the Emperors and Kings who have de-  
 stroyed the new order of things in France;  
 but, there is great room to doubt of the  
 disposition of the people of Europe to  
 remain in that state of degradation to  
 which they have been reduced. If, by  
 peace, the Prince means the continuance  
 of the present state of things throughout  
 Europe, I think he will find himself  
 greatly deceived; and, I think we have  
 only to cast our eyes over England and  
 France at this moment, to be convinced  
 that that sort of peace cannot be of long  
 duration.

With regard to the *financial* part of the  
 speech, it is the mere common-place mat-





ter, which has been in use from time immemorial, or, at least, ever since the Funding System began, with this exception in favour of the present speech: that it has nothing of *bragging* in it upon this subject. It would, indeed, have required an uncommon stock of brass in a Chancellor of the Exchequer to have advised his master to talk about the flourishing state of the finances, and the inexhaustible resources of the country; but still, there are men who would have done this. The speech is, in this respect, very humble indeed. It does not venture to anticipate an alteration for the better. It merely *abstains from lamentation* upon a subject which used invariably to afford a grand field for boasting and defiance. The Prince thanks his faithful Commons for the supplies which they have granted, and is sensible, he says, of the excellent mode of making provision for them; but, not a word does he say about the flourishing state of the revenue, as used to be the case upon all such occasions.

The close of the speech was expected to contain a recommendation to the Lords and Gentlemen to go home to their estates, there to reside and to find employment for the poor. This, to be sure, would have been something a little too low for a King's speech; and it would, besides, have been putting the Royal seal, as it were, upon the statements that have gone forth relative to the distressed situation of the people of England. Nevertheless, it was impossible to pass over the subject of distress in silence. Such silence would have been looked upon, and very justly, as a proof of a total want of feeling on the part of the government. Besides, such silence might have been, by foreign countries, looked upon as a sign of alarm; as indicative of a persuasion that the subject was too delicate to touch upon. This silence was, therefore, to be avoided, by all means; but, I cannot say

that I think the silence has been broken in the most judicious manner.

The Prince begins by adverting to the measures which he has been under the necessity of resorting to, and which measures, he says, have been productive of the *most salutary consequences*. Now, the measures to which he resorted were, the employment of horse and foot, and the sending of two Judges to Ely with a Special Commission. The result has been the quelling of the tumults in that part of the country, and the hanging, transporting, or otherwise punishing, a considerable number of persons. But, as to the further consequences of these measures, they are not discovered in the quiet state of the rest of the country. On the contrary, fresh tumults have broken out in several parts of the country. At Frome, in Somersetshire, it appears, that the people have risen in great numbers; that they repulsed the yeomanry cavalry; that they wounded the commanding officer and some of his soldiers, and that they were not induced to retreat till regular dragoons were brought in and employed against them. At Loughborough in Leicestershire, other tumults have taken place. It appears that a great number of persons, on hearing that a great master-manufacturer intended to reduce the price of labour, attacked his premises, killed a man who was placed as sentinel, and then destroyed the whole of the manufactory, machinery, and goods, to the amount of fifteen thousand pounds. At Birmingham it appears there had been large bodies of Colliers parading about with waggons loaded with coals. It is said they were taking the road to Oxford, with the intention of going to London, and *presenting the coals and a petition to the Prince Regent in person*.

In short, the whole of the labouring classes are in such a state of distress that it is impossible to describe. The employ-



ers have *no money*. The attempt to give them money by fresh issues of paper, and by raising the price of corn has done more harm than good; for the employers are all in debt; and, therefore, the money which high prices would give them, would not, for a time, be applicable to the purposes of employing labourers, while it would, in the mean while, augment the price of the labourer's bread; the Prince says, that he deeply regrets "the *continuance* of that pressure and distress which the *circumstances of the country*, at the close of so long a war, have *unavoidably entailed* on many of his Majesty's subjects." Now, what the Prince means by "the circumstances of the country?" I really do not know; nor can I guess at the meaning of this sentence; unless it mean that a long war unavoidably places a country in such circumstances as subject the people to heavy taxes and great distress. If this be the meaning, I have no objection to it. But, if it further mean, that the *war itself* was unavoidable, then I dissent from it altogether. But, reserving this topic, how comes the Prince to talk now of the *continuance* of the pressure and distress? At the opening of the Session, so far was he from talking about pressure and distress, that the flourishing state of the trade and revenue of the country formed a prominent topic of the Speech, and the statement was echoed back in the Addresses of the two Houses of Parliament. It seems rather inconsistent, therefore, to talk now about the continuance of the pressure and distress.

But, his Royal Highness tells us that this pressure and distress are, at any rate, *entailed* upon us. I believe this most sincerely; but, then, as entailed means settled upon us in such a way that we cannot get rid of them during our lives, but must hand them down to our children, it seems to me rather odd, that, in the very next

sentence, his Royal Highness should give it as his opinion, that the calamity is of a *temporary* nature. He says he trusts that it will be found to have arisen from causes of a temporary nature, and that it cannot fail to be materially relieved by the progressive improvement of public credit, and by *the reduction which has already taken place in the burthens of the people*.

It is singular enough that this last idea should have been pitched upon to close the Speech with. It is notorious that the Prince's Ministers did every thing in their power to prevent the great deduction which has been made from the taxes. It is notorious, that they represented the continuation of the Property Tax at five per cent. as indispensably necessary to the carrying on of the government. It is notorious, that they represented the repeal of that tax as beneficial to the rich only. It is curious enough, after all this, to hear the Prince representing the diminution of taxes as one of the great means of relieving the distresses of the nation.

However, I perfectly agree with this opinion of the Prince, and I shall be extremely gratified to see it acted upon in the abolition of great numbers of other taxes, the weight of which is now pressing us all to the earth.

His Royal Highness pays the people a compliment on the severe trials which they have undergone, and says, that he can rely with perfect confidence on their public spirit and fortitude in sustaining their present difficulties. It is not amiss for us, who are called Jacobins, to hear a little of this confession about difficulties. When we foretold, that the late wars would end in the ruin of our country, we were represented sometimes as fools, but much oftener as friends of the French. It appears, however, that something like ruin is come at last, upon all parts of the nation, except those who live upon the



taxes. The ruin which has so long been foretold; is not only come, but it is acknowledged by the government itself to have an existence. "Public spirit and fortitude" are very good things in cases where they can be displayed; but that case does not now exist. The nation has not now to repel the attacks of an enemy from without. It is an enemy within. It is everlasting taxation. It is an "entailed" distress, or malady. It is that which no public spirit, which no fortitude can enable a man to meet. Public spirit and fortitude will not satisfy the cause of hunger, and will not enable a man to pay a pound out of five shillings. His Royal Highness's Ministers have now found, as I long ago told them they would find, an enemy to contend with against whom there was no sort of defence. It was very easy to put down Jacobins and Levellers; very easy to suspend the Act of Habeas Corpus; very easy to pass the Sedition Bills; very easy to muzzle the Press. But, it is not so easy to quiet the cries of bankrupts and paupers. A strong government soon overcomes any thing that *resists*; but it cannot overcome a poor, yielding, crying, dying crew, such as this government now has to deal with. So far from being unwilling to pay heavy taxes, the farmers have, in divers instances, expressed their anxious desire to be enabled still to pay. As in the case of the Wiltshire Agricultural Petition, they say, that they have not only cheerfully paid all the taxes imposed upon them, but that they would gladly be able to continue such payment. With such a crying crew as this, what is a government to do? To confiscate the property of such fellows would be of no use; or, rather, indeed, it would be very injurious to the government itself, because it would put an end to taxation by destroying its source.

The difficulty of the Government, therefore, now is, *to get money*; not because people are unwilling to pay, but

because they are unable to pay; and, because at the same time, there is no pretence, in the mind of the common people, for imposing heavy taxes. While the war was going on, the nation paid because it was generally thought that paying was necessary to safety; but now this notion is entirely gone, and the generality of people are quite surprised to find themselves still ground down by loads of taxes.

His Royal Highness, however, has brought in by way of comfort to us, "the *ultimate success* which has attended our glorious and persevering exertions." I am not disposed to deny, that the nation showed great perseverance in what it thought a good cause. But, when we talk about ultimate success, we must look back a little, and see how we stood previous to entering upon the late wars. If we do this, we shall find, I believe, that, if there has been any *success*, at last, that is to say, any ultimate success, the people of England have had, and are likely to have not the smallest share of it. For I defy any human being, to show any thing that they have finally gained by it, except it be an ever-lasting load of taxes; or, to use the Prince's own word, an *entailed* load of taxes, to the amount of about 30 millions sterling a year, besides an addition of about six millions a year, or, at least five and a half millions a year, in the shape of poor-rates. This is the "ultimate success" which the people of England have achieved by their persevering exertions.

It is in vain to hope that this "*success*" is of a temporary nature. There is nothing to make us hope, that the interest of the National Debt will grow less, except by the means of a sponge. There is no reason to believe that taxes can be diminished. Unless taxes be diminished, paupers cannot be diminished in number; and, if they go on increasing in number, as they have increased during the last two



years, I most fully agree with those Members of Parliament, who have given it as their opinion, that, the paupers, if not checked in their increase, will, at no very distant period, become the masters of the country. It has been thought to be an exaggeration, to say, as Mr. Brand said, that whole parishes were left destitute of the means of feeding the poor. But, from what is at this moment passing under my own eyes, I have not the smallest doubt of the fact. The misery of the country seems to have travelled in all directions towards this part. From the North, from the East, from the West, it has kept creeping on to what the country people call, the "*zunny side o' Lunnun*." At last it has reached us, here, upon the verge of the Channel, where less misery has always existed, I believe, than in any other part of the kingdom. The paupers really swarm about our fields and hedges. Or, rather, the labouring people are almost all become paupers. The notions about daily and weekly and yearly *wages* seem to be all disappearing from men's minds. The change in this respect, within the last twelve months, is quite astonishing; and, certainly, not less distressing to contemplate than it is astonishing to behold. Having been a good deal from home, during the last six months, and a good deal engaged in my study when I have been at home, I have not, 'till within this month, paid very strict attention to the affairs of my farms and my labourers, and my settled labourers, besides, living in my own cottages, and having their fuel and regular pay all the year round, I have not had my attention immediately drawn to such matters, until within this week or two, when, having occasion for a number of hands to be employed about some root-crops, I have, in consequence of circumstances that it would be useless to detail, found that the whole country round about me is swarming with paupers. Nothing has struck

me so forcibly as to find that this was the case in the adjoining parish of Titchfield. A parish, rich in its soil, in its woods, in its waters, in its inhabitants, consisting of many gentlemen of fortune, and of numerous opulent and most excellent farmers, and of a neat little town, not surpassed in point of appearance, in proportion to the size of it, by any, perhaps, in all England. In short, this parish is that which I should select as a pattern for all the others in England, as to the management of its roads, its poor, or any other of its concerns. And, yet, in this parish, decent, honest, able, and well behaved labourers, and those in great numbers, too, are compelled to become paupers. So that, really, one *half* of the people are, at this time, living upon the means possessed by the other half. I am here, not stating what I have been told; what I have *heard*; but what I have *seen*, and what I daily see with my own eyes.

The supporters of the system would fain persuade us, that this *could not be helped by the government*; that it is *no fault* of any persons in power; that it is a thing *come upon us* some how or another; that we must submit *with resignation*; and, that, *in time*, we shall get the better of this unaccountable fit of illness. Before I remark upon this new doctrine of chances; this doctrine of *internal national diseases*, I will quote a paragraph from a ministerial news-paper, which will give you, in America, an idea of the sort of tricks which are resorted to, with a view of reconciling us to the miserable state of things, which I have just been describing. It is as follows:—"We stated yesterday that some *bodies of Colliers* had passed through Birmingham, drawing three waggon-loads of coal. They took the road to Oxford, with the intention it is said, of coming to London, and *presenting the coals to the Prince Regent in person*. We trust they have been induced to aban-



“don their intention, as their presence  
 “in such a manner in London would  
 “afford a *pretext for assemblages of the*  
 “*idle and the dissolute*. It might also  
 “afford a *handle to the discontented* to  
 “*encourage a belief that the Regent and*  
 “*the Ministers had contributed to the*  
 “*stagnation of trade, or could at once*  
 “*put an end to it*. No Government can  
 “be more *alive* to the distress, or more  
 “*anxiously occupied* in devising all possi-  
 “ble means to alleviate it. *But it has*  
 “*been produced by causes over which*  
 “*they had no controul*, and as well might  
 “we expect to render a district that had  
 “been *ravaged by a tempest* fruitful and  
 “flourishing again on the instant, as to  
 “restore at once perfect activity and  
 “prosperity to all branches of commerce.  
 “The long war *kindled by the French*  
 “*Revolution* has been the tempest, and  
 “peace, though it has stilled its violence,  
 “has not yet been able to *repair its da-*  
 “*mages or to heal its wounds*.”

As to the *Colliers*, the scene would indeed be a very curious one, if they were to reach London. The device of drawing waggon-loads of coals through the country is quite new. But, I imagine that something or other will take place to prevent these waggons from arriving in the Metropolis. That there is nothing *illegal* in coming up with coals in this manner is very certain. We are told in another paper; that the *Colliers* are advancing by three different routs, one of the waggons by Worcester, another by Coventry and Birmingham, and the third by Stourbridge. They draw the waggons themselves, and, of course, pay no turnpikes, because the turnpike acts impose a toll only upon vehicles drawn by horses or other beasts. They get on, it is said, at about twelve miles a day, and receive nothing but voluntary gifts of money, &c. on the road, declining to ask alms, because that would subject

them to the *Vagrant Act*, which would give the Magistrates a power of legally stopping their progress. Their motto is “rather work than beg;” which is placarded on their waggons. So that, really, here is John Bull coming up in his proper person, to make known the state of his own affairs. As the three waggons draw towards London, they will approach each other of course, and when united, will make a very respectable cavalcade. The writer whom I have just quoted, seems very much afraid of the consequences of their appearance in London. He is afraid that it might afford a handle to the discontented to encourage a belief that the Regent and the Ministers had contributed towards the distresses of the country! Indeed! What sad rogues the *discontented* must be! To pretend to believe that the Regent and the Ministers had contributed towards the distress; what sad fellows! In order, however, that the discontented may not succeed, the *Courier* assures them, that no government can be more alive to the distress, or more anxious to put an end to it. Whether the *Colliers* will believe this, is more than I can pretend to say; but, I shall not be prevailed upon to believe, that the distress has been produced by causes over which the government had *no controul*. Indeed, this is a notorious falsehood; for, it is acknowledged, even by this writer himself, that the late wars have been the cause of the calamity; and, it is a fact which nobody will deny, that this government might have avoided the beginning of those wars, and also the renewal and the prolongation of them. In short, the government itself boasts, that it was the main spring of the war, that it was the rallying point; that, in fact, the Bourbons were restored by England, and by her alone. After this, then, let us not hear it said, that the calamities which have come upon us in consequence of the war,



have been produced by causes over which the government had no controul; let us not hear the cause of these calamities compared to a *tempest*; for, in a tempest, the hand of man has nothing to do. The long war, we are told, has been the tempest, and this war is said to have been *kindled* by the French Revolution. That is to say, I suppose, that if one man is making an alteration in the affairs of his house or stable, and another come and interfere with him and give him a blow, the strife has been *kindled* by the change which the man was making in his house or stable! This is the way in which the French Revolution kindled war. And in much about the same sort of way the man accused of libel by an ex-officio information for having made an attack upon the Ministers, is regarded as a kindler of strife, and the doctrine upon which he is convicted is, that his writings have a tendency to produce a breach of the peace. No: the war was not kindled by the French Revolution. The war was kindled by those who hated the French Revolution; it was kindled by an opposition to the French Revolution; it was kindled by a dread of the effects of the principles of the French Revolution. Those, indeed, who wish to destroy germinating freedom in France, have, in some measure, met with success; but their success has been dearly purchased by the people of England.

This writer would have us believe, too, that the tempest, as he calls it, will quickly pass over. "*Peace*," he tells us, "though it has stilled the violence of the tempest, has not *yet* been able to repair its damages or to *heal its wounds*." In what manner tempests inflict *wounds* I do not know; but I am very sure that the wounds of the late war will not soon be healed. They will either produce a general convulsion and breaking up of the body; or, they will keep it in a feeble, decrepid, and insignificant

state for many years. Oh, no! the wounds of the late war are not easily healed. A country filled with paupers is not easily restored to happiness.

But, the main thing to keep in view is the incessant efforts of the hirelings of all descriptions to cause it to be believed, that the government is perfectly innocent of having produced the distress. All these efforts will be in vain. The rest of the world have known long ago, and the people of England now know pretty generally, that the unparalleled distress which afflict the country are to be ascribed to the government principally; and, indeed, if the government is not to be looked to upon such an occasion, to what end does it receive such immense sums of money for its support? The government takes special good care to claim the merit, the exclusive merit of flourishing finances and national prosperity; and shall it not have the demerit belonging to national calamity? Shall a nation like this be plunged into such intolerable misery and nobody in power to be made answerable for it? I trust not. I trust that the time is to arrive when due inquiry, regular inquiry, strict inquiry, will be made into the causes of all these sufferings, and that the authors of them will be made *responsible*; I mean responsible in the true sense of the word. A great deal is often said about *ministerial responsibility*. Indeed, there is nobody so forward to talk of it as the ministers themselves; but we have never yet seen any of it go into practice.

WM. COBBETT.

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## AMERICAN PACKET.

### No. V.

MY DEAR JOHN BULL,

You will find in the following two Letters, which have been *addressed to me*, and published in New York, by the author, some very useful information as to the state of Parties and Politics in Ame-



rica. You will see, besides, that I have not written wholly in vain; that what is printed here finds its way abroad; and, that, though we are compelled to put on muzzles, people know how to understand us. It will now be out of the power of any human being, or any infernal being, to prevent a literary intercourse with the United States. *Back* from that country will come truths invaluable. They will travel all the world over. So cunningly, so deeply, have things been managed, that the history of the *Thing* has been kept as close as if it had been the history of a horrid murder. Out, however, it will come now. It is a great deal to promise to make the world stare; but, I venture to say, that the world will be made to stare now. In the meanwhile, I beg your attention to the following Letters. Mr. Mitchell promises a continuation, and, in that case, you will be kept well informed upon American Affairs.

WM. COBBETT.

New York, 18th March, 1816.

SIR,—I received your favour, dated "Botley, January the 1st," on the 15th instant, together with its esteemed inclosures. I sincerely regret the circumstances which prevented your receipt of the papers forwarded you. The *sine qua non* of 9l. 16s. sterling, was a condition which effectually would prevent any man, in his sound senses, from reading a package of foreign newspapers, unless he had the mines of South America at his feet, and the slaves of Ferdinand the 7th to disembowel them.

There was an inattention, on my part, however, in sending you these papers, which I shall remedy in future. They shall no longer be submitted to the conveyance of a Deal boat, from the ship which carries them across the Atlantic, to the care of a Deal Postmaster, or to the more costly ceremony performed by the royal steelyards, in the hands of a post-office clerk. They shall be sent to you through the medium of a captain of a vessel, or that of a passenger, whom I can confide in, and not entrusted to the ship's letter bag. This was an oversight on my part, which, unfortunately, also escaped your notice, when you gave the directions in what manner papers might be sent to you unburdened with postage. Vessels arriving with you, particularly at the

mouth of the Thames, are generally boarded by boats for their letters, considering that they will arrive by land so much earlier than if conveyed by the vessel up to London. This, no doubt, produces considerable revenue to the government, and, in some cases, is of great advantage to the merchant, who does not consider a few shillings of any consequence, compared to the satisfaction of prompt intelligence. I know not whether this boarding for letters is by an order of Government, or whether it is sanctioned by general usage—but this I know, that it prevents all the subjects of his Majesty, in London, who are desirous of receiving foreign papers, from so doing, unless they submit to the expensive *sine qua non* of post-office jurisdiction. In a government which is anxious for the distribution of general knowledge, we should consider, that measures calculated to prevent newspapers and periodical publications in foreign countries from being charged with enormous postage, would be both wholesome and judicious, particularly as the weighing and charging of these mammoth letters produce no revenue; as news-papers, written on their backs, no one but a madman would receive such a package, at the price of 9l. 16s. sterling, when he has the privilege of rejecting it.—To a government, however, which is jealous of the improvement of the world, and whose aim is to keep her subjects in ignorance and darkness, the taxing of pamphlets and newspapers, by the means of the post-office establishment, is as effectual a method as can be adopted. The Spanish government, which is notoriously tyrannical, does not scruple to send their political sbirri in the shape of priests or inquisitorial mummers on board every vessel arriving from abroad, to make strict search for all books, papers, pamphlets, &c. which are taken on shore, and such only are returned as are thought proper, with the tax of the charge of inspection, &c. I state this, knowing it to be a fact; for, although now seated in an editorial chair, I have not always been in one, and have suffered, with others of my countrymen, some of the favours bestowed on travellers by the government of the old world. England, however, I presume, would spurn at imitating the tyrannies of Spain; and free and independent Britons, the



proud sons of Albion, would repel, with indignity, the idea of such a stretch of arbitrary authority being exercised among them. Thus it is that the free government under which you exist have no such ragged rif raf men of searching powers—none of those book and pamphlet hunting sbirri who serve the inquisition; but, indeed, Sir, upon reflection, it comes to the same point. The subjects of each nation are, in certain affairs, alike prohibited from information and the truth. The dogmas of the state religion in Spain, and the supremacy of the inquisition which uphold the Spanish tyranny, are guarded by the Lazaroni I have just mentioned; while the political janissaries of England, of that nation which boasts of its freedom and the rights of its subjects, have guarded and shut out all information, excepting that which suits their views, unless it is bought at a price which no man can afford. I ask you, Sir, what is the difference between the prohibition of foreign news-papers and this tax of postage? Did the Government wish you to receive them, or rather, was it not even strenuous to prevent the introduction of them; the regulation would be different, and letters alone would be taken from on board a vessel in the channel—packages, marked news-papers, or pamphlets would be left on board to take their fate with the vessel, and, if necessary, pay a small duty to the customs. You have said, that you were as well wedged in as if you were within the walls of China; indeed, you go farther, and say, that the wall of China is nothing in comparison to that which your government has invisibly built round your “tight little bit of an island.” Now, if I rightly recollect, the first lines of this song you quote run thus:—

Father Neptune one day to Freedom did say,  
If ere I should live upon dry land,  
The spot I would hit on should be Little Britain,  
Says Freedom, why that's my own island.

Now, how well or how truly these lines are descriptive of the situation of Little Britain or Great Britain, you better understand than myself, thank heaven! and, no doubt, you justly appreciated their truth when you received papers marked 9*l.* 16*s.* sterling, whereas, three days ago, I received your package from the post-office here marked 9 cents, or about 5*d.* sterling; and by the time I shall receive

your next it will only be marked 6 cents, or about 3*d.* sterling, no matter how great its contents, the postage being about to be reduced 50 per cent, which was laid on during our late war with you; and in which by the by, our “cock boats” made as great a figure as your Cockburn, being each inclined to a little conflagration now and then; the only difference of any consequence between them being that our cock-boats never \* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*, whereas, your Cockburn was notoriously skilful in this species of legerdemain.

Not wishing to touch upon old calamities or old sores, such as the burning of the capitol, which our tories among us nicknamed the Bladensburg races, nor wishing to hurt your feelings by the battle of New Orleans, which has no nickname in the republican ranks, and which, for humanity's sake, we hope may never again have a parallel unless our salvation makes it necessary, I shall drop the curtain upon a digression into which I was unintentionally led, and return to the condition in which you paint England, and then state to you the condition in which we are placed.

I do not at all wonder, that you, who have seen and experienced the freedom of thought and action exercised among us, in America, should feel yourself galled by the restrictions and chains which, with you, bind down intellect and fetter the human mind to the pillars of prejudice. I am not at all surprised, that, when you are inclined to write or speak those bold truths which you feel in the very current of your blood, that you remember at the same time, the reward you met with a few years ago from his *most gracious majesty* in your two years' confinement in Newgate; nor am I, in the least, surprised at your hesitation at writing or publishing any thing to which you cannot affix your signature, or at your correct knowledge of your laws as regards this point. An experience like yours, bought at the price it cost you, is not easily forgotten. No man since the days of Junius, has evinced more courage than yourself, as regards writing or publishing. Junius, however, escaped under that mantle of secrecy which WOODFALL, the noble minded and faithful publisher of his writings, was determined never to rend, and who suffered in his own person to maintain it inviolate,



while you, more open, and less lucky, had no ægis at hand.

I have now to give you some information, as regards our side of the water. The prints which visit your shores from this country, under the sanction of government, show you but one side of the picture, and unfortunately, it happens to be that on which deformity is painted. We have exactly the same freedom, and are (taken *en masse*,) the same happy people at this day as when you lived at Bustletown, near Philadelphia. The security of a republic is generally more safe under the little storms which ruffle and gently agitate the political mind, than in that quiet calm which apparently yields all power into the hands of the dominant party.

Thus it will ever be with America, so long as she retains her present happy form of government. The Ins and the Outs have pretty nearly the same feelings in one country as another; however, there was, and there yet is, a party among us which is denominated the peace party. This is the party which made such a blustering for peace, during our late war with you, and who laughed when they heard of the vandalism of sacking and burning Washington.

The old saying that "the smallest bodies make the most noise," was never more satisfactorily verified than by the clamours of these people at a time when nineteen twentieths of the yeomanry of the land, flinging politics and party feelings out of the question, werelike "grey-hounds on the slip," ready to start against their adversary at any point his appearance might invite them. This party, contemptible at that day, and which led your government to believe we were a divided people, have dwindled into insignificance, and their ranks are daily diminishing. Men of sense, perceiving the iniquitous delusion which was attempted to be imposed upon their understandings, by a few disorganizers, who were vain enough to suppose they could distract the country, and rise upon its ruins, have deserted them with feelings of remorse and contrition. Their remnant wander like wretched and condemned ghosts, exhaling with their pestilential breath, curses on their own folly, and the most abundant and profligate abuse against the Republicanism of America.

Is it not astonishing, and will it not even surprise you, who can so well judge of the folly and pertinacity of self-willed men, that, in this country, the most favoured under heaven, enjoying the blessings of God more profusely than all the rest of animated nature—living under a government the most mild and beneficent, that there should be a single mortal who could turn from this "fair field to batten on the moor"—on the abuses, on the enormities and on the rottenness of

\*\*\*\*\* Jurisdiction? How can you render it consistent with humanity, that any part of a people, even a single individual, should still remain the defender and the panegyrist, and rejoice in the successes of the only nation under heaven which has thrown gall into our cup, and which has, in any way, materially injured us, or discomposed our happiness? And yet I can assure you that there are men among us whose actions speak they do. I can love and respect a people while I can detest their government and their governors. Is it possible, that in the 19th century, there should be so much blindness in America, the only reading, writing and think-people under the sun?—for even our negroes read, and are school-masters besides. Is it possible, I ask, that such blindness can exist, as not to be able to separate a government from a people?

The thing is impossible, and such is not the case. It is produced by other causes, and these causes are well known. Your late war with us has opened many eyes on this subject, which were filmed before, when they regarded it; and ere long, I trust, we shall have purged away the infatuation which can look upon loathsome vice, tyranny, monopoly and the festering sores of a bankrupt dynasty, and hold them in esteem.

A bad custom, which, from long use, had grown into a habit, lead us yearly to run in debt with you for large quantities of your glazed and printed fabrics! and this custom has its existence with us yet—for even this very year (I mean the year since the peace) have we imported somewhere about eight millions of pounds sterling of your manufactures. This, however, I trust, will not be the case many years to come. A new tariff is now before Congress, where it is proposed to lay a duty of 33 and one-third per cent



upon all coarse cottons imported, taking their minimum value at 25 cents. This will give our manufacturers a chance, and the great body of your coarser cotton manufactures will be dispensed with. Our raising of sheep, particularly those of the merino breed, which improve instead of deteriorating in our climate, has given great spirit and activity to our woollen manufactures, and our fine broad cloths already vie in appearance and durability with yours, and a very little aid from our government will fix their stability.

It is this ruinous and bad custom of monstrous importation and running in debt which has created a fascination among a few of us for England, as unnatural as it is ridiculous, and the reason is this: The man who receives credit from you, although truly an American, feels himself as a debtor always does, not altogether so independent as when he owes nothing; besides, in receiving this credit, he makes new correspondence and new acquaintance. In the course of a year or two he is visited by half a dozen or more of British agents, \* \* \* \* \* who, always, on arriving on our shores, swell out to a monstrous size, and carry with them a consequence which would look very ridiculous, either at Birmingham, or Manchester, or Greenock. Now, it will never do for a man, who is asking for credit, and who is yearly receiving it, to abuse, to the face of the agent, the government under which he lives, or to vaunt the independence of his own, contrasted with the \* \* \* \* \* of England. Good breeding, at least, restrains his tongue, and he puts up, at first, with the pomposities and narrow-minded comparisons which his English visitor is fond of making, and which, through the sheer ignorance and prejudice of an education, which has swallowed down the prevalent idea among you, that no nation is so free, so great, or so happy as your own, he is unaware he is trespassing on hospitality whilst uttering. This it is which, in time, has its effect—its visible effect. No man can blow hot and cold with the same breath: that which commenced by sufferance ends in acquiescence. The moment the American debtor has so far forgot his dignity as to suffer his visiting creditor, or the agent of that creditor, to insult his understanding, by contrasting the two countries, and giving

his preference to the absolute corruptions and abuses of England, at that moment he loses a portion of his native independence—at that moment, ashamed of his own feelings, he hides them under effrontery, to conceal his blushes. It is thus that a corruption, the most disgusting, has introduced itself among us; and as your capital is so great, in comparison to ours, that few of our importing merchants are independent enough to reject the credit offered; so there are some of them, who, more or less, fall under its pernicious influence; for a profession of regard for England, or, at least, a tacit toleration as regards the abuses of her government, seem to be the *sine qua non* of liberal and extensive credit, with those who are the representatives of your looms and spindles.

As I intend to make the most of my communications to you through the medium of the press, and the columns of the paper I edit do not admit of letters of extraordinary length, I shall have to make them brief and add to their number. I shall endeavour to give you a fair picture of our internal situation, and show you how and whence arise the fallacious notions of British honour and British magnanimity disseminated among us. I mean as relates to the government. As far as I have yet proceeded, you will observe that I consider your manufactures among us have a considerable effect. I am obliged however, to bring this letter to a close, reserving myself for another opportunity to enlarge on this and other topics.

I am with respect, your obedient Servant,

ANDREW CALDWELL MITCHELL.

New York, 18th March, 1816.

P. S. Since writing the above I have learned that New Hampshire has succeeded in her election of a republican governor and council, with a large gain of democratic votes. Massachusetts, in her election of town officers, has been republican in various sections, where she before manifested and maintained the peace party and federal doctrine. Connecticut augurs well; her election, however, has not yet come on. I merely mention these things to corroborate my assertion, that the ranks of a certain noisy judge are thinning. As fair statements of our elections will speak clearer



than any thing else, I will regularly furnish you the results. New York is about to be gratified in a few weeks by the opposition of Rufus King proposed and forced into the contest by the federalists, in opposition to Daniel D. Tompkins, our present governor, whose conduct during our late war has excited applause from all sections of the union. You may easily conjecture what will be the result; but you will be at a loss to determine how men should be such rash adventurers in a lottery of loss, nothing but loss. Of these affairs and others, I shall speak fully to you in other letters.

A. C. M.

*New York, 22d March, 1816.*

SIR, — In my letter of the 18th inst. I considered, that the great importation of your manufactures into our country was one of the principal causes of the existence of a party, or even of a solitary American, who could feel a sympathy in the fate of the government of England, who could rejoice in her successes, or lament at her defeats. It is necessary for me to explain myself more distinctly on this head, the columns of a daily paper not admitting me at the time to do it.

The American papers which reach your shores by the approbation of your government, will fully convince you that there is that little industrious and mole-like faction among us, which yet regards, with real or pretended affection (I shall not say which), the government which endeavoured to crucify their forefathers, and but lately failed in a second attempt to immolate, at the shrine of its ambition, their brethren and their kindred. Your receipt of these papers, some of which I have perceived you have noticed, renders it unnecessary for me to adduce any proofs for the corroboration of a fact, which indeed, might well create doubt in the mind of any reflecting mortal. That there should be such turpitude, such unnatural, such monstrous feelings, in the bosoms of native Americans, is, indeed, astonishing—but it is no more astonishing than true.

When Timothy Pickering, formerly secretary of state in the administration of our revered hero (Washington) could lately rise on the floor of congress, in

the day of national calamity, in the day when your nation treated us with a degradation which would have roused a worm, and could glory in his assertion and his toast, that England was the bulwark of religion, and the world's last hope, and that he was willing this should be sculptured on his tombstone, it puts scepticism at defiance, and speaks as loudly and as plainly to our senses as does the thundering culverin to our ears, that there must exist an abominable and disgraceful junto, when this hoary-headed old man still retains his seat in the legislative assembly of the general government.

You, perhaps, will ask what has all this to do with my declaration that our importation of your fabrics, on a system of credit, is one of the principal causes of this perversion of sentiment among us? Timothy Pickering, you will say, is not an importing merchant, or dealer in British dry goods. That is true enough—but when faction is abroad it looks for leaders. There are those among us “above the dull pursuits of civil life,” who are ready to grasp at straws, provided ambition points the finger, and invitation should flatter them that there may be one day an opportunity—an opportunity for what, ask you? I answer, to riggle themselves into power. These men, for the most part, have read Shakspeare, and know there is somewhere in that volume a play mentioned, called *Michilimalico*, “which means much mischief.”—Could they but enact it, they would readily cast the parts in such a way as their tools should play the fools, while they reaped the profits of their folly.

The importer, I have said, generally speaking, becomes more or less acquainted with the pomposo agent, who, in most instances of later years, follows the goods shipped, both to secure the remittances and to procure more orders for the house. I have seen these men, both in the city and in Philadelphia, hanging about the doors and counting-houses of our importers until they have wormed themselves into all the affairs of their establishments, and into all the secrets and affairs of their friends. At first, as strangers, they were treated with condescension, and their inquisitiveness was replied to with urbanity, and so continued until their constant and



dangling attendance frustrated (if such was even the wish) any opportunity of secrecy. They have been and are spies upon us; and whether they get a reward from your government or not, they are deserving of it, for, in my opinion, they are equal adepts, if not more expert in conversion than your missionaries in the interior of Africa, in the hands of the Hottentots, or among the worshippers of the idol Juggernaut in India.

It is astonishing how our important merchants, when once in the chains of their crediting factors, or rather those of the agents of their factors, begin to show their distaste for any thing fabricated or invented in America. These prejudices are not kept, however, to their own bosoms—they feel a pleasure in disseminating and spreading them.—They reject, with disdain, even the selling of an invoice of American cotton fabricks or woollens, even as if it would contaminate their shelves or their British assortment.—They even make their choice of favourite customers, being more liberal to those who scout at our manufactures, and looking with a jealous eye on any one who would make a comparison between British manufactures and the vile trash which we fabricate. Hitherto they have been quite prosperous, but many doubts are afloat that their prosperity is but as the shadow, and that the substance has vanished while they were dreaming of its increase. Within three months back any man who had a fair character might, without a shilling, have bought 100,000 dols. of your British cottons, at a credit of 6 or 8 months from, at furthest, half a dozen houses in our city. How he could pay for them scarcely entered their heads whilst selling. This delusion, however, appears to be drawing to a close; and should short settlements of long accounts, produce long faces, both with you and with us, it will not create much surprise as regards myself.

I have, however, wandered a little with respect to the effect which our importation of your fabricks produces. It is not only the importer, it is the purchaser on commission; it is the country store-keeper—the city shop-keeper—the ladies' milliner (and the ladies, you know, always bear weight), who are led away from the real and just manner of thinking and re-

flecting by your gew-gaws which we import; besides this, the purchasers on credit from these dealers (for credit is a word well understood in America) must not approach them under the garb of democracy, for it would be ridiculous to attempt gaining credit, (which, with those who want it, is generally considered a favour,) provided they enter the threshold with sentiments adverse to those which the holder of the articles considers as the most important feature in his profession of faith. He owes it as a consideration due to the piece seller, who owes it again, in his person, to the package seller, who owes it again to the commission merchant, who owes it to the wholesale man, who owes it to the importer, who owes it to the agent. For what? For credit, to be sure. Here I must except the country store-keepers of the great western states of Pennsylvania, Kentucky, &c. who, generally, besides stores, hold farms, and not entirely dependant on credit, retain their independance and republican principles.

Now, this very credit, which is, and has been, so greedily sought after, is very likely, to reduce to poverty many thousands, who, if they had been content to have plodded on leisurely, might have been safe and secure: to be sure, they would not have been doing business so miraculously brilliant, but then they would have had some solidity, some reality in their operations; whereas, now, the brilliancy is all on paper, and to be found no where else. There are many among us to day who look with averted eyes and dejected countenances on those very pages of Dr. and Cr. which, a few months ago, they regarded with pleasure and delight; and the men on your side of the water will, some of them, feel the effects produced by our extravagant and superfluous importations.

I think you will comprehend my meaning, as to the manner in which these cotton goods, &c, affect our politics; and they not only affect our politics, but if they were to be continued to be imported in the same proportions, they would soon have a visible operation in diminishing the national credit, and impairing the health of the Republic and all connected with it. When the balance of trade is enormously against a nation, as is the case at



present with America as regards your country, it matters not how fast a few individuals may grow rich, the nation grows poor, and the policy would certainly be unwise that would wink at it. Such, however, I trust, will not have to be laid at the doors of our Congress—a wholesome protection to our own looms and spindles will put a stop to a mania, which, even already, has produced much mischief, and prevent an inundation both disastrous and unwholesome.

Notwithstanding, however, the operations of your calicoes, and the effect that credit produces among us, you must by no means consider it is sufficient to poison the mind of the mass of our yeomanry.

There are, at least, thirteen, if not fourteen, of the states decidedly republican, and the cause is daily gaining ground, notwithstanding all the arts, all the groanings, of all the laborious federal presses in the Union. As a conclusive and corroborative evidence of this, I give you the words of Mr. Wm. M. Coleman, editor of the Evening Post—the very pillar of his party in N. York, and who has fought its battles with a rancour bordering on enthusiasm, and a valour equal to that of the hero of La Mancha. Speaking of the nomination of Rufus King, by this party, and the acquiescence of Mr. King to run the gauntlet in the election for governor of this state, against Daniel D. Tompkins, the tried and patriotic defender of his country's honour in the hour of danger, and who for three successive elections, has received the suffrages of the people of New York for the highest office in their gift, the editor of the Evening Post thus expresses himself:—

“ I regard this as the last, if unsuccessful, the last opportunity that federalism will, for a long time, and perhaps, ever have to raise its head in this state. She is now called upon to play for her last stake—to put her life upon the die; and if she fails, what grounds can there be for her future hope, or future struggle? But

“ Non tam turpe vinci

“ Quam contendisse decorum est.”

“ It will be less dishonourable to fail, if fail we must, than it will have been glorious to have made a last struggle in such a cause and with such a leader.”

Here you will plainly see the despondency of gloomy forebodings of the organ of a desperate and deserted party. This speaks at once to the senses—there is no misunderstanding it—it speaks of a contest, in which defeat is uppermost in his imagination, in despite of himself; in despite of his known caution, and in despite of his prudence and cunning, all of which are his attributes, he cannot avoid manifesting his horrors and alarm at the hazardous temerity which leads his party to enter the lists.

Our election for President and Vice-President takes place in the fall of this year. The candidates named by the republican members of Congress are, James Monroe for President, and Daniel D. Tompkins for Vice-President. I do not know whether the party of Tim Pickering and Co. will think it worth their while to make a bluster with any candidates of their selection—but should they be so inclined, they will add a greater triumph to republicanism.

What will the politicians on your side of the water say, I mean those who guide your helm of state, when they learn that the late war with you, which these peace-party papers endeavoured to persuade you would eventuate in separating the states, and creating a revolution in our government, has, instead of doing so, consolidated, in a manner which defies intrigue itself, the republican sentiment throughout the nation. Instead of having been an injury to us, in the least—instead of having weakened or depressed us, it has had the most beneficial effects. It has developed to us our strength and our resources, of which, generally speaking, we were uninformed, or had, by no means, sufficiently estimated—and should we ever again be called upon to exercise our powers in the same way, we shall remedy the defects we entered into in the commencement, and start with a stock of experience which was just making itself visible when the negotiations of Ghent called upon us to lay down our arms.

Besides this, it has introduced among us a spirit for manufacturing for ourselves, which must not only continue, but, by necessity, increase. Already it is computed that we make, annually, 120 millions of yards of coarse cotton goods, which saves us an importation, in this one article, of



upwards of thirty millions of dollars. Ask your men of Manchester how this will operate upon them in a few years hence; and ask your Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he would not rather purchase our custom again, by treble the expence of the late war with us, than have lost it, as he has irretrievably done in this, and in many other fabrics, which we shall henceforward never look for abroad.\*

Had our hostilities continued with you three years longer, there is not an article for which we have the raw material within ourselves that we should not have manufactured, and that, too, in a degree of perfection.—You will recollect that it was only about the epoch of the French revolution that the first essay of the growth of cotton was made in the southern states. It is computed that we now raise upwards of 300,000 bales, and consume more than 100,000 bales in our own factories. Late essays have been made in the cultivation of sugar, which have succeeded beyond expectation; more money having been made out of an acre of ground with less labour than was ever before yielded from any one article of agriculture. This

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\* I have here to correct an error in my printed letter of the 18th inst. which, in speaking of our inordinate importations of your manufactures in the last twelve months, states them at 8 millions of pounds sterling, it should read 28 millions.

to be sure, was, in some measure, owing to the high price which sugar, at that time, maintained; but it clearly demonstrates, that in a few years to come, we shall be able to supply ourselves without the West India Islands. There is another article which, if it receives attention, promises to be a most valuable and useful plant, and a source of riches to our northern states, which have, of late years, been completely outrivalled by our southern and western. This is a species of the nettle, which takes its name from the discoverer, and is called the *Urtica Whitlowi*. This plant, which grows to the height of 6 feet, is covered with a rind, which has qualities superior to hemp, as the rope which has been made from it has proved, being nearly double in strength to that made from the best hemp of Russia; besides which, it is capable of being bleached, and possesses a divisibility of fibre, that it may be spun and wove into a cloth resembling the finest camel's hair. To what improvements this discovery may lead is yet for time to develope. I am much mistaken, however, if it does not become an article of much value and of high estimation. Admonished by the length of my letter, I must close with assurances of respect, &c. your obedient servant,

ANDREW CALDWELL MITCHELL.